



# International Vedic Hindu University\*

*Bringing Vedic Sciences to Life*

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**Course No. HUC5001 PRINCIPLES OF HINDUISM 3 Credits**

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**Catalogue Description of the Course** – An overview of Hinduism, theories of karma and reincarnation, science and Hinduism, six darshana's including Vedanta and Yoga.

**Course Objectives:** - An overall acquaintance with Hindu philosophies, religious faith, traditions, and practices; recognizing the common roots and unique identities of different streams of Hindu thought including Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

**Books:**

**i. Books suggested for reading:**

- Hinduism – A short history – Klaus K.Klostermaier (ISBN-1-85168-213-9) One World Publication, Oxford / Boston. (<http://www.oneworld-publications.com>), (year 2000).
- Outlines of Hinduism- TMP Mahadevan- (2<sup>nd</sup> edition-1960) -Chetana Limited, Bombay, India

**ii. Additional Reference books / Recommended Readings:**

- Indian Philosophy Volumes 1 and 2, S.RadhaKrishnan (ISBN019563820-4), Oxford India Paper backs (1995).
- A History of Indian Philosophy (five volumes), Surendranath Dasgupta – (ISBN084260975) Motilal Banarasidass, NewDelhi, India (1975).

**Note:** The matter covered in this course is not available in any one single book. Therefore no single book is recommended as the textbook. Instructor's notes, sometimes the copies of the selected articles / web sources are used to supplement the studies in this course. There are several other books available on various aspects of Hinduism, covering and interpreting the subject from different perspectives. Students are encouraged to refer to such sources also to get the different flavors of interpretations of Hinduism in different contexts and countries.

**Policy about sending instructor notes & assignments:** This course is currently offered online. Students receive online access to the instructor notes and assignments. Students turn in their assignments online and the grades and instructor comments and points earned are conveyed to the student.

**Course Delivery** - The course is divided into eight modules. A tentative description and distribution of the modules is given below along with a scheme of tests/ exam.

### **Module: 1 Sources and beginnings of Hinduism**

- Name, meaning, characteristics of Hinduism. Source materials for the study of Hinduism - vedas, vedangas, upa-vedas, epics, puranas, tantras, agamas.
- Analysis of the types of source materials - historical, mythological, mystic, archaeological, linguistic.
- Antiquity and authenticity of Hinduism; living dynamic nature of Hinduism.
- Approaches for the study of Hinduism - traditional, western, historical, modern, political, futuristic, philosophic, and miscellaneous and others.

### **Module: 2 Vedas and vedic ideals**

- Extent of the present vedic literature - Names and classification; authorship or divine revelation (apaurusheya).
- Vedic devas, Rishis, vedic rituals, approach to different needs of life, vedic ideals, commentary on vedas.
- Concepts of creation-yajna and rita;
- Select vedic hymns for study (purusha sukta, nasadiya sukta, and select rikṣ expressing the universal ethical values)

*(Test-1 covering modules 1 and 2)*

### **Module: 3 Smritis and Hindu religious traditions**

- Brief introduction to the smritis, evolution of smritis over a period of time.
- Purushartha, five maha yajnas, manu smriti, yajnavalkya smriti,
- Commentaries on smritis, varna and ashrama systems, caste system.
- Religious purification (prayaschitta), samskaras, social and cultural elements, present day status of the smritis and nibandhas.

### **Module: 4 Epics, Gita and Puranas**

- Brief introduction to the epics, time and place, transparent nature of characters from the mortal, mythological and mystic planes.
- Influence of epics on culture and literature.
- Puranas, characteristics, number and extent, major and minor.
- Brief introduction to the contents of some of the purana's, internal revolts and rejuvenations, multiple gods, goddesses and hierarchical deities.
- Assimilation of the epic and purana stories by Buddhism and Jainism.
- Populism, puranas as harmonizing factors between the knowledge and faith, bringing philosophy to the practical life, holy places, pilgrimages, the variety of Indian life seen in ritual, temples; different texts called the gitas and tantras.

*(Test 2 covering modules 3 and 4)*

### **Module: 5 Theories of Karma and re-incarnation**

- Theories of karma- across different Hindu systems and philosophies.
- Basis for the avataras, theories of re-incarnation / re-birth.
- Paths to final liberation, jnana, bhakti, karma and raja yoga.
- Other methods of simpler nature derived, nama sankirthanana, charity, shift from the original concept of personal 'penance' to the mundane 'charity' and 'teertha kshetra', role of gurus and institutions.

### **Module: 6 The major Hindu philosophical system**

- Bhagavad-Gita, as a spring board of different darshanas and faiths.

- Each darshana and faith as an alternate path to the goal of final liberation.
- Yoga as a darshana and its importance, four yoga's as given in Gita.
- Srikrishna and his pervasive influence, bhagavata purana.
- Gita as the link between the streams of veda-yoga-yajna-purana and vedanta, commentators and interpretations of Bhagavad Gita, traditional and modern.
- Six darshanas - systems of Indian philosophy, Vedanta.

**Module: 7 Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism**

- Introduction to Buddhism Jainism it's tenets.
- Developments, conflicts with the vedic tradition.
- Later confluence of the different streams of thought.
- Sikhism, tenets, historical perspective.

*(Test 3 covering modules 5, 6 and 7)*

**Module: 8 Hinduism and sciences**

- Scientific disciplines through vedas to tantras.
- Material sciences, medical sciences like ayurveda, alchemy, toxicology, cosmetology, sthapatya veda.
- Mathematical sciences like astronomy, vedic mathematics.
- Mystical sciences , siddhi, astra weapons,
- Miscellaneous arts and other social sciences, music.

**Term Paper:** Students will prepare a term paper (of approximately ten pages maximum) on a topic related to the principles of Hinduism. A proposal indicating the topic, a short abstract (of about 300 words) along with the source material /reference the student intends to use for the study should be submitted at the time of second test. The proposal needs to be approved by the instructor. The term paper should reflect students understanding of the topic selected.

**Grading Scheme:** Final grade shall be assigned according to following scheme:

**A** 90%- 100%, **B** 80% -89%, **C** 65%-79%, **D** 50%-64%, **F** less than 50%